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The Will of Sir William Browne, M.D.

(1692—1774.)

(Edwy S. Clayton, F.I.C.)

Reprinted from the British Medical Journal, *December 31st, 1904.*

LONDON:
Printed at the Office of the British Medical Journal,
429, Strand, W.C.

1904.

The Royal College of Surgeons -

From the author -

January 14, 1905.

JAN

THE WILL OF SIR WILLIAM BROWNE, M.D.

(1692—1774).

The following transcript of the curious will of a somewhat remarkable man may interest readers of the British Medical Journal. Since making this copy from the will registers of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, I have referred to the original will and codicil in the testator's own bold and legible handwriting. The official copyist of the registry omitted, *more suo*, nearly all marks of punctuation, besides occasionally changing the spelling, and everywhere substituting double minuscule *f's* for the capital letter used by the writer of the will. In the transcript I have restored, so far as I could, the original punctuation and spelling; and the several quotations from Horace, Vergil, Juvenal and Terence, with one or two phrases from the Greek, which are so distinctive of this will, are reinserted in capitals, as they appear in the original, instead of in the badly-written and rather illegible cursive characters used by the copyist, who seems to have had a difficulty with interpolations so unusual in the documents to which he was accustomed. Therefore the following copy is *verbatim*, and nearly, if not quite, *literatim*.

The will mirrors the man, who was well read, successful, and a most estimable character, though evidently rather vain and fussy. He was educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and after graduating B.A., M.A., and M.D., and practising medicine for many years at Lynn, became a Fellow, and subsequently President, of the College of Physicians of London. This office he held in 1765-6. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was knighted in 1748. The Browne medals at Cambridge were of his foundation. His daughter's husband was brother of the antiquary Martin Folkes, President of the Royal Society in 1741. Various amusing stories are told of Sir William Browne, illustrative of his vanity and harmless eccentricities. At one period he was caricatured by Foote, the actor, but he does not appear to have objected in the least.[1] I am informed by my son, Mr. Cuthbert E. A. Clayton, that there are in the possession of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society three portraits of Sir William Browne, together with two of his works, one of the latter containing an interesting MS. note, possibly written by Browne himself.

[1] See D.N.B. VII, 75; also Munk, *Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 1878.

An error occurs in the will, and is copied in the register. Sir W. Browne was President of the College of Physicians in 1765-6, and died in 1774; but in his directions concerning the inscriptions on the Gold Medals, by a *lapsus calami* he gives the date MDCCLXXVI, which of course should be MDCCLXVI.

THE LAST WILL

of SIR WILLIAM BROWNE, Knt., M.D., of Queen Square, in the Parish of St. George the Martyr, Middlesex. My Soul, DIVINAE PARTICVLAM AVRAE, under the deepest sense of Duty and Gratitude, for a plentiful Possession of the Blessings, and merciful Praeservation from the Accidents of this Life, I most devoutly Resign into the hand of Our ALMIGHTY and ALMERCIFUL CREATOR, most humbly hoping for a Future Life of Felicity and Immortality, through the Merits, and Mediation of Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, Our GRACIOUS SAVIOUR. Under whose Banner, NIL DESPERANDVM EST CHRISTO DVCE, ET AVSPICE CHRISTO. EN TOUTO NIKH. Whose Revelation, however incomprehensible, in its plan and Execution, is demonstrable in its End and Intention to make Men Virtuous and happy: which must therefore necessarily build CHRISTIAN FAITH upon its onely Foundation Reason. Detestable are all Attempts to set these two at Variance: on the one side by certain Minute Philosophers, absurdly assuming the Name of Free thinkers, and yet denying the Existence of Liberty itself, who set up Reason in Opposition to Faith: on the Other Side, by certain Enthusiastic Divines, as absurdly claiming the Character of Just-reasoners, and yet denying the Jurisdiction of Reason itself, who set up Faith in Opposition to Reason. Both parties, how different soever in principle and Design, concurring in Consequence and Effect to sap the Foundation of CHRISTIANITY; to Cancel our Divine MAGNA CHARTA; and to rob us of Our SHEET-ANCHOR of Security, with regard to the Evils of This Life, and of Hope, with regard to the Injoyments of a Life Aeternal.

My Body, MORS SOLA FATETVR QVANTVLA SINT HOMINVM CORPVSCVLA, on signs of Putrefaction, I direct to be Deposited in the Bosom of my Mother Earth, close by that of Dame Mary, my Wife for Forty Five years, in the most private manner, without Pall Bearers, Escutcheons, or Equestrian Ornaments, or any Attendants, except my Men-Servants: that my Funeral may neither be an Object of Entertainment to Spectators and Strangers by Attracting their Observation, nor of Concern to Friends and Relations, by requesting their Attendance. On my Coffin, when in the Grave, I desire may be deposited in its Leather Case or Coffin my Pocket Elzivir Horace, COMES VIAE, VITAEQVE DVLCIS ET VTILIS, worn out with, and by me. Having erected my own and Ladys Monuments in Hillington Chancel I appoint a Marble Monument to be Erected for me, in Westminster Abbey, (where I designed to have been interred if I had died first,) according to my Draught, Inscription, and Directions left for this purpose. I desire it may be placed as near that of my Master Doctor Mead, MEDICORVM FACILE PRINCIPIS, as any Vacant Arch may admit, otherwise in the Poets Corner over against that of Mr. Prior. Monuments, furnishing a MEMENTO VIVERE, as well as, MEMENTO MORI, deserve to be regarded, not as Insignificant and lying Memorials of the Dead, but as beneficient and

truth-telling Lectures to the Living: the most Mendacious of them all being a Panegyric on Virtue, and Satire on Vice, and consequently perpetuating their proper Distinction. VIRTVTEM ET VIVOS SPERNIT, QVI NON HABET VRNAM.

My Estate with which God hath been pleased most bountifully to bless me, far beyond my Wants and Expectations, even up to a Rental of Eleven Hundred Pounds a Year, ET AVITVM APTO CVM LARE FVNDVM, ET PROPRIO MARTE PARTVM, I dispose of in manner following. I devise all my Manors, Messuages, Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments, situate in Runcton-Holme, Wallington, Thorpland, Stow-bardolph, Wimbotsham, Downham, Bexwell, Denver, Hilgay, Wigenhall, St. Peter, Tilnay All Saints and St. Lawrence, Islington, Terrington St Clement and St. John, Walsoken, Clenchwharton, West Lynn, North Lynn, South Lynn, Kings Lynn, Gaywood, Bawsey and Grimston in the County of Norfolk, Freehold, Copyhold, and Leasehold, in Possession, Reversion, and Remainder. (Subject as well as my Personalty and Stock in the Funds, to the Payment of my Debts, Legacies, Funeral Charges, and Monument; and subject to a Rent-Charge of One Hundred and Fifty Pounds a year, which I devise to be paid half-yearly from my Decease, clear of Taxes and Deductions, to my Grandson, Martin Folkes, Esq, during the Life of his Father, And I give him for the same Term, the Use of my Dwelling House, Coach House, and Stable in the Parish of St. George the Martyr, and Use of my Plate, Linnen, House-hold-Furniture, Chariot, Horses, and Stable-Furniture, (the absolute property whereof is hereinafter given,) and subject to a perpetual Rent-Charge of Twenty Guineas a year, which I devise to be paid yearly from my Decease, clear of Taxes and Disbursements, to the Chancelour, Masters, and Scholars, of the University of Cambridge, and their Successors, In Trust for founding a Classic Scholarship: by electing the best Classic Scholar, who shall offer himself for Examination within a Year from his Matriculation, public notice being given by the Vice-Chancellor a Month before such Election. I will that my Scholar, so to be elected, shall enjoy the Rent-Charge, with Arrears which may happen by Vacancy, for Seven Years, on these Conditions, that he shall Admit himself at Peterhouse, and reside there every intire Term, during his Under-Graduate-ship: that he shall behave well, Studiously, and religiously, and give up to the Fellows Table every Sunday a Copy of Greek, or Latin Verses. That he shall go to Lectures with the Mathematic Professor for Three Years, being sensible from depending on my own sole strength how much LABOR IMPROBVS may be saved by such Assistance: That he shall regularly and reputably perform all his College and University Exercises, an Act, first, second, and third Opponencies, in the Sophs-Schools, and take the Degrees of Batchelor and Master of Arts: and subject to a Rent-Charge of Twenty Pounds a Year, which I devise to be paid Quarterly, from my decease, clear of Taxes and Deductions, to my long-faithful Servant, Elizabeth Ashley, for life, to her sole and separate Use: and subject to a Rent-Charge of Fifty Pounds a year, which I devise to be paid Quarterly, from my Decease, clear of Taxes and Deductions, to my long-faithful Servant Alice Sigley, for life, to her sole and separate Use: and Subject to a Rent-Chage of Ten-Pounds a Year, which I devise to be paid, Quarterly from my decease, clear of Taxes and Deductions, to my servant Mary

Dunn, Sister of Alice Sigley, for life, to her sole and separate use: and Subject to a Rent-Charge of Ten Pounds a Year, which I devise to be paid Quarterly, from my Decease, clear of Taxes and Deductions, to my late Servant Thomas Mott for Life:) To my Friends Charles Pepys, Esq., of Imington, in the County of Cambridge, Thomas Western, Esq, of Abington, in the same County, and Maximilian Western, Esq., of Cockthorp in the County of Oxford, their Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, IN TRUST, for preserving Contingent Remainders, and for the Uses following. That is, after my Decease to the use of my Daughter Mary, wife of William Folkes, Esq., of Hillington, in the County of Norfolk, for Life; after her Decease, to the Use of William Folkes, for life; after his Decease, to the Use of my Grandson for Life, without Impeachment for Waste by either of the three, and with power to them to grant Leases not Exceeding Twenty One Years, and for the last to Settle in Jointure or Marriage, in the proportion of One Hundred Pounds a Year Rent for fifteen Hundred Pounds Fortune in Money or Value: after his Decease, to the Use of his Son or Sons, whom he shall have Appointed by Deed or Will, and the Heirs of their Bodies respectively, and for want of such Appointment, of his Son and Sons Successively, and Heirs of their Bodies; and for want of Sons, to the use of such Daughter or Daughters, whom he shall have so Appointed, and Heirs of their Bodies, and for want of such Appointment, of his Daughter and Daughters Successively & Heirs of their Bodies; and for want of Daughters, to the Use of the Heirs of my Body, and for want of such Issue, QVOD AVERTAT D. O. M. it is my most Melancholy Will to Devise All my said Manors, Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments to the Chancellor, Master, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge, and their Successors, IN TRUST for Founding two Physic Fellowships: HOMINES AD DEOS NVLLA RE PROPIVS ACCEDVNT, QVAM SALVTEM HOMINIBVS DANDO. The Candidates to be Batchelors of Arts, between Four and Seven Years standing, and strictly examined in Physic, and general Learning, by All the Electors, whom I appoint to be, not Ministers of State, but the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Peterhouse, Regius Professor of Physic, Doctors of Physic resident in the University, the Praesident and three Senior Elects of the College of Physicians, London, all for the time being: by the Majority of whose Suffrages in Person, or in Writing, on a Day to be named, with public Notice One Month before, by the Vice-Chancellor, all Elections shall be made. The Vice Chancellor to decide, in Case of equal Suffrages. I trust to the Conscience of each Elector, and Adjure him most solemnly, that his Rule be DETVR DIGNIORI. My Fellows residing in Peterhouse for at least three months together in each of the first five Years; shall injoy their Fellowships Ten Years: and shall attend Courses of Anatomy, Botany, Chemistry, and Materia Medica, and the Practice of Physic in St. Thomas's, or St. Bartholomew's Hospital for two years at London: and shall regularly take the Degree of Doctor, by keeping two Acts and Opponencies, on forfeiture of their respective Fellowship for Non-Performance of any one of these Directions. They shall not go out of the Kingdom: as I am certain, that by the infinitely Superior Public Libraries, Regulations, Studies, and Disputations of our two Universities, over all others, and the much more rational and simple Practice of

Physic in England, than Elsewhere, (and particularly better suited to an English Constitution, as each Nation has peculiar Diseases from its Climate and Customs,) far more excellent Scholars and Physicians must always be formed there, than any where else upon the Globe. Therefore I desire that mine may be called, KAT' EΞOXHN, Non traveling Physic Fellows. The Rents and Profits of my Estates shall be aequally divided between my Fellows, by half Yearly Payments on the first Tuesdays of January. and July in each year, so far as to Three Hundred Pounds a Year to each. All Overplus beyond that shall be distrlbuted by the Vice Chancellor, at every commencement, in Gold Medals of Five Guineas Value, (to be Struck by a like Dye to that hereinafter mentioned,) to such Batchelors of Arts, and Undergraduates, who shall deliver to Him the best Performances in Verse and Prose, and in Greek, Latin, or English, on Subjects to be published by Him in January before. All which Performances shall be fairly written, dated, and subscribed by the Authors in a Book, to be laid upon the Register's Table, at every Commencement, for publick Inspection. The Annual Account of the Rents and Profits of my Devised Estates, fairly entred in a Book, shall also be laid on the Register's Table, for the same purpose. I Appoint my Daughter, Son in Law, and Grandson Executors of my Will, and give them Fifty Guineas each for Mourning. I give Rings to them, to Mr. Folkes's four Daughters and Husbands, to my Friend Captain Wilson, Mrs. Hudson and to my Trustees, to Mrs. Spelman, Mrs. Pepys, and Miss Spelman, to have this Motto, MEMENTO VIVERE, the Name and Date to be on the inside. I devise to my Executors my Lands and Tenements in Marham, Norfolk, and in Welney and Littleport, Cambridgeshire, Freehold and Copyhold, now let for twenty two. but worth Thirty Pounds a year, to be sold, worth above Six Hundred Pounds, and the Money aequally divided among the Sons of my late Kinsman Richard Browne, Custome-House Officer, who shall be living, and the Representatives of them who shall be dead: Provided the Eldest Son shall surrender the Copyhold to the Use of the Purchasor and his heirs, (his Father having been [sic] admitted, by a Declaration of Trust, that it was to the Use of me and my Heirs,) but if he shall refuse to do this, then he shall be compelled to surrender the same to my Heir, who shall surrender the same to the Purchasor and his Heirs, and Divide the Money equally among the other Sons and their Representatives, excluding the Eldest Son from any Share at all, for such refusal. But I devise my Estates to the Use of my Daughter, and of my Son in Law, and of my Grandson, for their Lives, on these Conditions onely, That they, or some of them, who can perform the same, shall Sufficiently settle my Copy-hold Lands and Tenements to the Uses of my Will, which I have either not Surrendered, or not Sufficiently Settled to those Uses, and if they neglect or refuse to do this, then my Trustees shall hold all such Copyhold Praemises to Charitable Uses, and Divide the Rents aequally for setting up Young Men in Trade, and in portioning Young Maids in Marriage. That they or any of them, who can perform the same shall not bar my Reversion of in Fee of the Estates I settled on my Daughter's Marriage, or if they have so done, that the same Estates shall be settled to the Uses of my Will. That my Grandson, his Sons and Daughters and their Husbands, while in Possession of my Estates, shall take and write my Surname before their

own, and quarter my arms, And on any of them failing in the Performance of any of the said Conditions, my Trustees shall hold my Estates, for the life of each Person so failing, to the Use of the Chancelor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge, to distribute the Rents and Profits in such Gold Medals, in such manner, and for such purpose as before mentioned. I direct my Executors to procure a Die to be Engraved, proper to Strike Medals of Gold of Five Guineas Value. The obverse to be an Imitation of my Marble Medallion Bust, the Motto, ESSE ET VIDERI. On the Exergue, in two lines, GVLIELMVS BROWNE, EQVES | NAT. III. NON. IAN. A.I. MDCXCII. On the Reverse, Apollo, radiated seated on An Advanced Throne, resting his Lyre on his left Knee with his left hand, and extending his Right hand with a Laurel-wreath over the head of a Scholar, with a Gown and band, kneeling on the Steps, and praesenting a Scroll in his Right hand, and holding down his Square Cap with his left hand. The Motto, SVNT SVA PRAEMIA LAVDI. On the Exergue, in two Lines, ELECTVS COLL. MED. LOND. | PRAESES. A.S. MDCCLX[X]VI. With this shall be struck Two Gold Medals of Five Guineas Value, and sent to the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge annually in the beginning of January, to be given by Him, at the following Commencement, to Two Under-graduates: one of whom shall Deliver to Him in June before, the best Greek Ode, in imitation of Sappho; the other the best Latin Ode in imitation of Horace, on a Subject to be appointed by Him, in January before. Which Odes shall be fairly written, dated, and subscribed by the Authors, in a Book, to be laid on the Register's Table, for public Inspection, at the Commencement. And I charge my Estates for the perpetual Performance of this annual bequest. I give to the Praesident and College or Commonalty of the Faculty of Physic, London, Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds, In Trust, for Founding a Latin Medical Lecture, to be read every Year on three Successive Days, in their Theatre, Notice being given three Days before in the Newspapers, by one of the twelve junior Fellows, to be Appointed by the Praesident and Senior Elect, on a Subject of his own Choice: for which he shall be paid by the College the clear Sum of Ten Pounds. And in every Year, when the Lecture shall not be read, that Sum shall be paid by the College to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in Hatton Garden, of which I have long been a Member, or to the Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, at their Choice. I give my Daughter All my Personal Estate, Money in the Funds, Plate, Jewels, Pictures, Linnen, Household-Furniture, Chariot, Horses & Moveables, except such as herein specifically given. I give my Grandson my Diamond Rings, Diamond Buckle, and Stone Imitation of it, Gold Watch & Chain, and Seals, and my Gold Crook-headed Hickary Stick, and all my Books and Papers, except such as my Daughter shall chuse, and those having her Maiden Arms, Desiring him to continue them in their four Classes, and to charge his Successors so to continue them. The remaining Pieces, which I published, I desire he will give amongst Friends, and dispose of as he pleases. I give Alice Sigley the Furniture of my fore Parlour, except Pictures, and Marble Table, and Bust, and also of my two Pair of Stairs Blue Bed-chamber, together with my Leather bottom-Chairs, and three smaller claw-Tables, and the Furniture with the Clock of my Kitchin and back Kitchin. I give her Sister the Furniture of my two pair of Stairs Green

Bed-Chamber, and Servants Garret. And I give each of them a complete Set of China Coffee and Tea things with six Silver Tea Spoons & a pair of Tongs. I give all my Servants a Year's Wages, that is, to my House-keeper Ten Pounds, to my Cook Seven Pounds, to my Coach-man Fourteen Pounds, to my Footman Seven Pounds. I give Ten Guineas to be distributed among twenty poor Widows of the Parish of St. George the Martyr, not receiving the Parish Relief* In Witness whereof, I have to this my Will contained in three Sheets of Paper, all written with my own Hand, set my hand and Seal on this Eleventh Day of February in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred and Seventy two

EPITAPHII DISTICHON PENTAMETRVM.
HOMO, HVMANI A SE ALIENVM NIL PVTANS!
PATRIA, O! PERPETVA ESTO ET LIBERA!
} W. BROWNE.

Signed, Sealed, Published, and Declared by the Testator to be his last Will, in Our praesence, and Witnessed by us, in his praesence, the Interlineations, and Addition, to which an asterisc refers, being first made. Charlotte Schaw—Elizabeth Schaw—Charlotte Schaw Junr.

CODICIL.

I SIR WILLIAM BROWNE of Queen Square in the Parish of St. George the Martyr, and County of Middlesex make this Codicill to my last Will, in manner following. I devise the Moiety of Two Leases of Lands, lying in Runcton-Holme, and in Wigenhall and Elsewhere in the County of Norfolk, holden under the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College in the University of Cambridge, which I lately Purchased of the Assignee of Robert Harvey, a Bankrupt, to my Friends and Trustees in my Will named, In Trust to renew the same from time to time in their Names, out of the Rents and Profits thereof, and to permit my Grandson Martin Folkes, of Hillington, in the County of Norfolk, Esq., to receive the rest of the Rents and Profits thereof for his life, and after his decease, to permit his Son and Sons, whom he shall have Appointed by Deed or Will, and his and their Executors and Administrators, and for want of such Appointment his first, second, and every other Son Successively, and his Executors and Administrators, to receive the rest of the Rents and Profits thereof, and for want of Sons, to permit his Daughter and Daughters, whom he shall have appointed by Deed or Will, and her and their Executors and Administrators, and for want of such appointment, his Daughter and Daughters Successively, and her and their Executors and Administrators, to receive the rest of the Rents and Profits thereof, and for want of Daughters I will that my Trustees shall Assign over the Moiety of my two Leases to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge. In Trust, for the same Uses, to which I have Appointed my other Estates, that I have devised to them in my Will. By Recommendation of Doctor Cooke, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, I will that a Third Gold Medal of like kind with those two in my Will mentioned, shall be sent by my executor annually, with those Two, to the Vice-Chancellor of that University for the time being, to be given by him to the Undergraduate, who shall produce the best Greek Epigramm after the Model of Anthologia and the best Latin Epigramm, after the Model of Martial, on a Subject of his appointing, to be given all Three on the Commencement Day. I Charge my Estates also with

this third Medal for ever. I will that my Executor shall cause a Marble Monument to be erected for me in Westmr. Abbey, according to the Draught No. III, left by me for that purpose, with the Inscriptions I have directed for it. The Arch on the West Side of the East Door leading into the Cloisters, whereon is a small Oval Bust, which it seems may be put up on the Vacancy over the Arch, is the place I appoint for it. I desire my Executor to shew the Draught first to Mr. Wilton, in Portland Street, and then to Mr. Moore in Berners-Street, and whose Proposals he most approves, to prefer him to execute it. I bequeath to my Housekeeper Alice Sigley, for her very long and faithfull Service, from her Age of Fifteen Years, to her Lady, to my Daughter, and to myself, a Gold Mourning Ring, and all my Household Furniture, being grown Old-fashioned and useless to my Grandson, with my Household and Wearing Linnen, and Cloaths, except that my worst Suit shall be given to my Footman, and my Slippers and all my Shoes to my Coachman. I give her also all my China, except the Furniture of my Dining Room Chimney Piece, and Eleven Dishes and Covers, with the Plates to them belonging, and the curious Red China Tea-Pot with Silver Spout, and the Cups and Saucers with a Butterfly on their bottoms, and beautiful Basons, which as they were remarkable Favourites of his Mother and Grandmother, I desire my Grandson will keep, and also set a high Value on them. And as I know it will be the greatest gratification to my Housekeeper, to have the Custody during her life of the Pictures of her Lady, and Father, and of my Daughter, and of myself, which all four hang in my Dining Room, I Desire that she may have this gratification from my Executor Lastly I will that my three Favourite Coach-Horses, and my Daughters Favourite Clara shall be taken Care of, and Indulgently maintained by my Executor, during their respective Lives. In Witness whereof, I have to this my Codicil set my hand and Seal, this Twenty First day of July, in the Year of Our Lord 1773. W. Browne. Signed, Sealed, Published, and declared to be a Codicil to his last Will, by the Testator in Our Presence, and Attested by us, in his Presence. Witness Charlotte Schaw—Elizabeth Schaw—Charlotte Schaw, Junr.

This Will was Proved at London with a Codicil the twelfth day of April in the Year of Our Lord One thousand Seven hundred and Seventy four before the Worshipful Andrew Cottee Ducarel Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Worshipful Sir George Hay Knight Doctor of Laws Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the Oath of Martin Folkes Esquire the Grandson of the Deceased and Surviving Executor named in the said Will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the said Deceased having been first Sworn duly to Administer.

Edwy G. Clayton.